

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION USNATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2737
USICA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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DEPT PLEASE PASS TO WHITE HOUSE AND TO SENATOR BYRD'S
OFFICE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, NATO
SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF SENATOR BYRD'S PRESS
CONFERENCE JULY 3

REF: USNATO 6593

SUMMARY: AN INFORMAL PRESS CONFERENCE ORGANIZED JULY 3
DURING THE BRUSSELS STOPOVER OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER
ROBERT BYRD DREW SOME 20 MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE
MAJOR WIRE SERVICES AND A NUMBER OF LEADING EUROPEAN
PAPERS. RESULTING COVERAGE STRESSED SENATOR BYRD'S
ASSURANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL BACKING FOR THE U.S.
DEFENSE COMMITMENT IN EUROPE AND THE TWIN IMPORTANCE
OF HIS VISIT AS A PRESIDENTIAL EMISSARY AND MAJORITY
LEADER OF THE SENATE. END SUMMARY.

1. MEDIA COVERAGE OF SENATOR BYRD'S PRESS CONFERENCE
IN BRUSSELS JULY 3RD, ORGANIZED JOINTLY BY USNATO AND
EMBASSY BRUSSELS, CONVEYED TO READERS THE MAIN POINTS
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EFFECTIVELY MADE BY THE SENATOR DURING THAT
MEETING. RESULTING COVERAGE CITED THE SENATOR'S
REMARKS REGARDING THE STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN
COMMITMENT TO NATO AND THE DEFENSE OF WESTERN EUROPE,
CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THIS COMMITMENT, AND
THE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION GIVEN BY THE UNITED STATES TO
THE SECURITY INTEREST OF ITS ALLIES. THE MEDIA ALSO

UNIFORMLY STRESSED THE IMPRESSIVENESS AND STATURE OF SENATOR BYRD AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS VISIT.

2. A LENGTHY ARTICLE IN BRUSSELS' LEADING PAPER "LE SOIR" (JULY 4) OPENED BY STATING THAT RESPONDENTS TO A RECENT "U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT" SURVEY ON "WHO LEADS THE UNITED STATES," PLACED SENATOR BYRD IN FOURTH PLACE, AHEAD OF VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AND SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR BRZEZINSKI. THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO STRESS THE PRESIDENT'S RELIANCE ON THE SENATOR FOR CONGRESSIONAL ENACTMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROGRAMS. COVERING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN SOME DETAIL, THE "LE SOIR" REPORTER WROTE THAT ACCORDING TO THE SENATOR THE "NEUTRON BOMB," MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AND SALT, "CAN ONLY BE TREATED FROM ONE ANGLE, THAT OF THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES." "LE SOIR" CONCLUDED BY SAYING: "CLEAR-CUT AND NO FUSS. IT WAS THE KIND OF INTERVIEW WHICH IS REASSURING AND REFRESHING."

3. WEST GERMAN "DIE WELT" OF JULY 5, NOTING THAT SENATOR BYRD WAS SENT TO EUROPE BY PRESIDENT CARTER "CHARGED WITH UNDERSCORING THE ADMINISTRATION'S DEEP COMMITMENT TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND WITH REMINDING THE EUROPEAN ALLIES OF THEIR PROMISES," GAVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE SENATOR'S HAVING "EXPRESSED HIMSELF IN FAVOR OF PRODUCING THE NEUTRON WEAPON" IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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EVEN THE SOVIETS "MAKE NO CONCESSIONS." ON THE PERSONAL SIDE, THE PAGE ONE ARTICLE, CAPTIONED "CARTER SENDS POWERFUL MAN AS VANGUARD TO BONN," DESCRIBED THE SENATOR AS "A BRILLIANT MAN, GOOD LOOKING AND SELF-ASSURED."

4. "WHEN A MAN LIKE ROBERT ("BOBBY") BYRD, 60, VISITS THE FEDERAL CAPITAL OF WEST GERMANY, AND ON TOP OF THAT IS SENT BY JIMMY CARTER HIMSELF, YOU SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE," WROTE THOMAS KIELER, "DIE WELT'S" PERMANENT WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT TEMPORARILY IN THE FRG.

5. "FRANKFURTHER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG" OF JULY 6, FRG'S TOP DAILY, CARRIED A HALF-COLUMN ARTICLE DATED IN BRUSSELS WHICH WAS BASED ON ICA EXCERPTS OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSMITTED IN THE REFTEL, A COPY OF WHICH USNATO PROVIDED THE PAPER'S BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENT WHO HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ATTEND THE SENATOR'S PRESS CONFERENCE.

6. THE "ATLANTIC NEWS" OF JULY 5, AN AUTHORITATIVE

TWICE-WEEKLY BRUSSELS BULLETIN DEVOTED TO NATO AFFAIRS, IN ITS COVERAGE OF SENATOR BYRD'S VISIT, CALLED HIM "A KEY PERSONALITY IN CONGRESS" AND UNDERLINED "THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS VISIT TO EUROPE." THE ARTICLE FOCUSED ON THE SENATOR'S STATEMENTS ABOUT THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF WESTERN EUROPE, AND CONGRESS' SUPPORT FOR THAT PLEDGE.

7. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE ARTICLES, AP AND REUTERS CARRIED STORIES ON THE PRESS CONFERENCE. REUTER HIGHLIGHTED THE SENATOR'S BELIEF THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF HOPED-FOR SOVIET CONCESSIONS, THE U.S. "SHOULD START

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PRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON WARHEAD." AP EMPHASIZED THE SENATOR'S "DELIVERING PERSONAL ASSURANCES FROM PRESIDENT CARTER OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE NATO ALLIANCE AND EUROPEAN DEFENSE." BENNETT

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